

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Committee,

I am Kathy DellaMura, a Registered Nurse and the Executive Director of Continuum Home Health, a New Haven based provider of home healthcare services to persons with severe and profound mental illness. Our current census is 520 patients, 95% of whom are covered by Medicaid.

Our patients have spent significant portions of their adult lives in State or private hospitals. None of them are able to live independently in the community without our care. They hear voices, they are paranoid, they are delusional, and most of them are too cognitively impaired to function independently in the community without the support of our homecare services.

We have a cadre of patients, approximately 25, who have been discharged from Connecticut Valley Hospital over the past five years and who have spent a total of nearly 500 man years in that institution. These gentlemen are now flourishing and integrating into the community for the first time in their lives at a cost savings to the State of approximately \$9 million per year. If Continuum Home Health is not here, and we will not be if any cuts are made to our Medicaid rates as we are currently running a deficit, our patients will be back in State institutions, acute care hospitals, prisons, and on the streets.

The sad irony is that the costs of the alternative to our existence are gravely higher than the status quo.

I have to share with you that we have been able and willing partners over the past three years with the State's Utilization Review initiatives with Value Options, Inc. We have reduced our average visits per patient by more than 20% saving nearly 5 million over the past 2 ½ years. We will continue to do this if you allow us to stay open.

Thank you very much